

BX9878
.9.K27

BACCALAUREATE

SERMON

By Rev. Lawrence Keister, D.D.
Lebanon Valley College





BX9878
.9.K27

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2009 with funding from
Princeton Theological Seminary Library



REV. LAWRENCE KEISTER, D.D.



BACCALAUREATE

SERMON Delivered

by Rev. Lawrence

Keister, D.D., Presi-

dent of Lebanon Valley College

Sunday Morning, June 6, 1909

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF MEMBERS OF THE
FACULTY AND THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Candor of Christ

John 14:2; 14:1-15



WE expect to find in our Bible a text suitable for every occasion. In the hour of sorrow we look for the word of comfort; in the day of toil we seek renewed strength; in the crisis of decision we are guided by its principles; in the temptations of life we derive from it insight for choice and courage for action. No other book offers us equal aid and hence we open our Bible to-day with a confidence that is based on personal experience.

We expect our text to be a living germ of truth to us, a fruitful theme for our thought, a practical means of knowing what God thinks of us and what he would have us think of him. Like a seed our text should grow downward and upward, downward into our own life and upward into the life of God. Sent forth by him his word returns to him again in the life that is uplifted and purified by it.

An occasion like this emphasizes educational aims and educational attainments. It calls attention to the value of mental development associated with moral and religious culture. If our Lord were here this morning in visible presence would it not be a most suitable occasion for him to speak? He could speak as a great Teacher and a great Leader of men. Surely no discoveries of science since the beginning of the Christian era and no progress in philosophy would leave him without a message for this audience, discredit him as a Teacher or discard him as a Leader.

My text comes from his lips and would that my sermon come from the same source! If I have chosen my text my text has also chosen me. It is not mine by my own act alone. In like manner I ask you to choose this text and let this text choose you and lay hold of you and inspire you and even govern you. I would that it might bring some great truth to us all and bring us all to the truth in its perfect manifestation

in the Person of Christ. We need to see him and know him and love him and his candor flings wide the robe of his humanity and the garment of his Deity in order that we may see him as he is. He longs to be understood and trusted, when he says, "If it were not so I would have told you." Is he hidden from your vision this morning or can you look with unobstructed view upon this supreme Personage whose humility honors his majesty and whose gentleness never parts company with his power.

To catch one glimpse of the Person of Christ is a consummation devoutly to be desired by the class of 1909 at the close of its college career and at the beginning of its ministry to mankind. But this same vision is essential to us all especially to all the friends of higher education who have consecrated themselves to the work of training leaders for this and the succeeding generation; These leaders must know science and literature, history and philosophy but they must know men in order to succeed and above all they must know God and God revealed in Christ for Christ is still the Teacher of teachers and the Leader of leaders.

Our text clearly implies if it does not positively affirm that we can rely upon the Candor of Christ for all it means to him and all it ought to mean for us. His mind and heart may not be thrown open to angels but they certainly are to men by His single assertion, "If it were not so I would have told you." Concerning himself he has nothing to conceal. His perfect candor as he stands before us is his personal appeal to us for our personal confidence. Are we waiting for him to make a winning appeal? to do something better? to do something that fits our fancy? Does the infant in arms disdain its mother's smile and mutely demand something better? Do the flowers of spring refuse to come forth at the call of the April Showers and the warm rays of the sun?

The candor of Christ brings him face to face with us while our confidence brings us face to face with him. His candor and our confidence are answering attitudes of moral

beings who ought to face each other and who ought to be friendly. Both attitudes are alike personal as we find them described in the Bible and as we know them by experience, and if we meet with Christ and if Christ meets with us it must therefore be on the plane of personal life. Our first meeting must be on the plane of our life and our next meeting ought to be on the plane of his life for our confidence ought to answer to his candor for our uplifting till we know him and the fellowship of his suffering. He must know us as we really are by our own consent and desire before we can begin to know him as he really is by his wish and will. There must be candor on both sides if there is to be knowledge and friendliness and fellowship.

Candor always means simplicity and never duplicity—it is one thing and not two—it means sincerity and not insincerity for it goes to the center or rather comes from the center, it means openness of spirit like that of the little child who is willing to be known and loved by all whose right it is. No wonder Jesus placed a little child in the midst when his disciples were contending with each other who should be greatest in his kingdom. They had missed his meaning. They were speaking and thinking as men. They were below the plane of personal life. A child as an elemental person is placed before them in order to correct their error by a living example. Suffer the little children to come unto me he said for these are persons undeveloped it is true but unperverted also and more ready than mature men to meet me on the plane of personal life. Do they doubt his word or dislike his presence? We can not believe it. They listen to him, they love him, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

When Christ came into the world he came to his own and his own received him not but to as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God. He came forth from God to mingle with men, to be associated with men and to be trusted by men. He is here to be loved by men and if any man will to be hated by him. When asked

in his earliest ministry, Where dwellest Thou? he replied with childlike candor, Come and ye shall see. This was his attitude toward the uninstructed. He spoke of his departure at the close of his public ministry and of the many mansions in his Father's house giving to his disciples his personal assurance, "If it were not so I would have told you." They were scarcely impressed with the mention of the many mansions and they knew not the way thither. His candor is his attitude toward the unappreciative. After his resurrection when doubting Thomas failed to appreciate his personal presence he said to him, Reach hither thy finger and touch my hand and be not faithless but believing. This was his attitude toward the unbelieving. He comes to these three classes, the unbelieving, the unappreciative and the uninstructed, and wins men who conscientiously come to him and know him and appreciate him and trust him. This simplicity, sincerity, and openness of spirit appeal to us and we may test his presence and his power as freely and as fully now as those were tested by men in any age of the past for the candor of Christ is like himself the same yesterday, to-day and forever.

Alone and in reverent mood consider a lily and permit it to minister to you in holy things like a priest of the Most High divinely arrayed, anointed and appointed for this very service. There you take off your hat if not your shoes because your meditating priest has admitted you into the divine Presence. There you worship God who is a spirit in spirit and in truth. In like manner come into the presence of Christ with no third person to lead your thoughts or close your spirit like a sensitive plant and there you will appreciate him, you will bow before him in submission and adoration, for he it is of whom it is written, "And let all the angels of God worship him."

Campbell Morgan chides the skeptic of to-day. "You tell me God does not speak to men as he did to Abraham. Will you let me correct that statement? This is the truth, men are not listening as Abraham listened. Right in the

depth of the soul, by a direct and definite revelation, he will speak to the man who wants to hear." The simplicity and sincerity and openness of his spirit draw us toward Christ, while the duplicity and insincerity and deception on every hand drive us in the same direction. Down deep in our own hearts we want to know him and the power of his resurrection. Other life may claim us but his alone can satisfy us. Other persons influence us but Christ alone appeals to all there is in us. He is the sum and substance of our religion on the one side even as the Christian is the sum and substance of our religion on the other side. If we take our stand here we have only one great question to decide. Can we answer his candor with a corresponding confidence? Do we come to meet him as he comes to meet us? Have we entered into conference with him on the plane of his own thought and action? Are we persons to whom he can appear as a person and to whom he can speak? persons who can appear before him and speak to him? and in a word whose confidence is worthy of his candor?

If our text is really ours this morning and if our theme has entered into our souls both will abide with us and bless us in the name of our Lord. They will be paths by which we approach God and by which he draws near to us. The Jew held in his heart the ways that led to Jerusalem and shall the Christian not know him who is the way to God? "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," and "no man knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son revealeth him." Through the person of Christ we reach the personality of Deity and the knowledge of God as Father.

Three thoughts impress themselves upon our minds this morning.

First, the candor of Christ offers us an unobstructed view of the Person of Christ.

Second, we need an unobstructed view of Christ for it requires a Person to save a person.

Third, we must be saved by a Person who is master of the natural and the supernatural, the two realms of our being and life.

First, let us consider that Christ's candor offers us an unobstructed view of his Person.

We have no portrait of Jesus that has come down to us from an artist of his own time. No bust of his was modeled from life. No statue made in marble and not even a death mask to preserve to later generations the features of his face. No picture was ever made from life and no representation of him for he is unlike the great of earth who leave these memorials behind. The picture he has left is the picture of his Person. This is authentic and we see him in the four Gospels—not his body, not even his face, but his mind and heart, his great spirit pulsating with human sympathy and filled with divine love. We hear his words of heavenly wisdom, we behold his works of divine power but the supreme privilege we possess is that of looking in upon his inner life. We see the motions of his mind as he teaches us and the free action of his will as he orders his steps in obedience to the will of God. We are touched with the tenderness of his sympathy as he converses with each inquirer who seeks his counsel. We wonder at the power of his love changing men and uplifting them till they share his life and breathe his very spirit. He is presented to us by the four inspired historians not as a character with given traits and tendencies, not as an individual, singular, selfish and self-centered, but as a Person who is self revealing, self governing and able to give himself for others and then to others so that he becomes their ideal of manhood and the inspiration of their life.

My friends, it is worth our while to come into his presence and to know that we stand in personal relation to him. It is worth while to meet his candor with our confidence. He offers to us an unobstructed view of himself. He comes to us and it is only reasonable that we should come to him. The fanatic comes in his feeling the formalist in the rites of

worship, the critic with his intellect. But this partial coming is not real coming but only apparent and often disappointing. Nothing but a miracle can give it value by changing it into a personal coming that opens the spirit to an unobstructed vision of Christ. "Tell mother I'll be there," was the message sent on before by William McKinley when he hastened from the National Capitol to the bedside of his dying mother. So Christ has sent his promise on before while he himself came in the fulness of time and now he is with us always. As Christians we have welcomed him while others only accord to him a degree of respect or at best a measure of reverence. As Christians we have become the servants of Christ while Christ has undertaken to make us the sons of God. Now are we the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is.

The one great need of Christians to-day is to come into closer personal fellowship with Jesus Christ. His candor invites it. But his candor stands in severe contrast with the insincerity and duplicity that afflict the sons of men. Close beside the sinless Christ we see the Scribe and Pharisee whom he described with a candor that to-day is called "brutal." But Jesus knew a hypocrite when he saw him and it served his purpose to tell what he knew. No deceiver, however self-confident ever meets Jesus on his own plane of life and action without sincere repentance. The candor of Christ demands a like candor in his followers and hence we wonder at ourselves and others when we hide a single sin under the folds of that garment we have called "the cloak of charity." Shall wrongs in the church be concealed for personal reasons when the chief Person in the Church requires perfect sincerity? Shall defaulters in the financial world go unpunished because they have influential friends? Shall courts of justice permit the law to be subverted by technicalities? Shall men who profess to be good quietly lend themselves to evil and yet be innocent?

Ten thousand young people in the churches of Cleveland during the month of January last tried to live like Jesus for two weeks. It was a glorious attempt but it must have been somewhat disappointing because men are not called to live like Jesus but only like Jesus can enable them to live. Christ respects the personality of the Christian and the Christian should respect his own personality. He should know himself with this end in view, his excellences and defects, his weakness and strength. These young Christians of Cleveland knew themselves well enough to know that there was something better than they had yet realized in their religious life and they knew where to look for light and liberty. They were trying to stand clear as Christians and be more worthy of Christ and his cause. They were pressing closer to him in a most practical and personal way.

There is a splendid phrase we often hear, the self-revelation of God, that helps us to appreciate the significance of Christs coming, the value of his presence with us, and the meaning of his earth life. It gives us insight and also breadth of view. We like the phrase. But is it not true that there is no other way by which God could reveal himself? If God is revealed in nature or in divine providence or in the Bible or in the Person of Christ then God himself must make the revelation. He must come forth from the invisible and enter the visible world. Nor can he commission any inferior being to do this for him else were the revelation imperfect and perhaps untrue. He must reveal himself and so we come to our phrase again with the assurance that it is true and that God has revealed himself in the Person of Christ as an act of his sovereign will.

When we have accepted the *fact* of God's self-revelation we can adjust ourselves to the *form*. The virgin birth, the miracles and the resurrection of Christ are not natural facts in the sense of ordinary but they are natural in the sense that this world is the field of their manifestation. They are supernatural facts in the sense that they are manifestations of a

supernatural being. This supernatural element explains them all easily and we may say naturally. If Christ were only a product of his own age and nation, if he is not a supernatural as well as a natural being his life is a mystery as dark as history contains. But if he is both natural and supernatural then his life is the light of men. He is man in self-realization and God in self-revelation. He is the Person in whom God and man have met.

The point, pith and power of revelation is not a book nor a miracle but a Person. Men will always find room to criticise the Bible and reason to doubt the miracles. As it has been so it will be. When one disputed point is finally settled another will be discovered and each individual will be called upon to fight his own battles and come to his own conclusions. But while critics may undertake to dissolve the Bible and reconstruct it again, while they may arrange the chronology to suit their own theories, and while they may endeavor to reverse the whole trend of its teaching they have never made a successful assault against the Person of Christ. They have never borne him out of the Bible and out of history and out of the temple of God as though he were a helpless idol in their iconoclastic hands. Jesus met his critics face to face and vindicated himself to his foes as he had done to his friends. Never has he been defeated in argument and never overcome by temptation whether tempted by his critics or by Satan himself.

"In me ye shall have peace," says this Person who constitutes the sum and substance of our religion on the divine side. Are we ready to believe it? In the world we have tribulation according to his word but where shall we find peace? Shall we find it in the irreconcilable conclusions of the different schools of critics? Shall we find it among men of wealth and women of fashion? Shall we find it in courts of justice and in legislative halls? Shall we find it in schools and churches? Not in men and not in methods; not in wealth and not in fashion; not in courts and not in legisla-

tures; not in culture and not even in the church; and the Bible unless the church and the Bible help us to know Christ as a Person who is the self-revelation of God.

And so we come to our second thought. Men need an unobstructed view of Christ because it takes a Person to save a person.

Some one has said "no man can save himself, let some one give him a hand." He needs outside aid. Phillips Brooks tells us he needs inside aid also. "No man can save another unless he saves himself." Salvation is a personal matter, and the agent who effects it must be a Person as is the one who is saved. Some men prefer to think that salvation is by obedience to law as though they ever really obeyed the law and as though this was easier than faith in Christ. Some expect to be saved by character as though honesty in the payment of financial debts were the sum total of moral obligation. Some expect to be saved by conventional goodness as though that were more than an earthly product. Some expect to be saved by the goodness of God whom they consider too good to exclude them from His Kingdom for sins they regard as little or unimportant. But if men are averse to facing Christ here as Savior how can they expect to face Him there as Judge? And if God had regarded law and character and conventional goodness and his own goodness apart from Christ, if you can conceive of such goodness, as sufficient for man's redemption would he have made promise of a Savior when man first sinned and fulfilled that promise at the most auspicious period in history? Let us accept it once for all that Christ is an essential part of our life personal, social, ecclesiastical and political and that there is no other name given under heaven or among men whereby we must be saved.

We can not separate Christ from the law of God for He is the fulfillment of the law. We cannot separate Christ from good character for He is the best example of good character. We cannot separate Him from conventional goodness if there

is any real goodness in it. We cannot separate him from the goodness of God for he is the supreme expression of that goodness. Men are not saved by law because they fail to obey it. They are not saved by conventional goodness which is nothing more than respectability. They are not saved by character because it is only a product of personal choices. They are not saved by the general goodness of God because it does not meet their particular need.

Outside of salvation by Christ character is the favorite method of salvation. It is adopted by men of the world and a whole ecclesiastical body who believe they are Christians and the best Christians there are. But no man is saved by his own character. His character may be good as character goes but we hardly expect a man to rest his redemption on himself alone. The Pharisee went about to establish his own righteousness and did not submit himself to the righteousness of God. If it be said the quality of his righteousness was not the best, there is a ready reply. This is true of the Pharisee and just as true of every man who builds his salvation on himself.

Dear friends, we are not saved by character, not by our own and not even by the character of Christ. We are not saved by the character of Christ because we are too far from it. Look upon his moral perfection, his love of every virtue, his devotion to duty, his courage for the right and then look upon your own imperfection and weakness and failure in comparison or must it be in contrast? There appears to be a great gulf fixed between his character and our own and unless we can come closer to him and he come closer to us there can be no redemption for us. But if he comes to us it will be as a Person and not as a character and if we come to him we must come not as characters but as persons. He comes to us by way of the manger and the cross. He comes as a Person and offers himself as a Person. He never offered his character as a sacrifice for sin. His character is inviolate. He offered himself.

Perhaps we have given too high a place to character and too low a place to personality. We have characters all around us so named because of their peculiarities and their persistence. We have characters in the novels we read and in the plays we witness. Characters in the drama and in fiction are representative and not real. They have their origin in some human mind and can rise no higher than their source. Perhaps we expect too much of the theatre and the work of fiction. Perhaps we are surprised to see both show signs of degeneracy as when Oscar Hammerstein combines with Oscar Wilde to debase the moral sentiment of a great city with the Salome dance and at the same time to fill his purse by filling his house. One good result and perhaps only one can be traced to this flagrant abuse of morals. Many a man and many a woman saw on the stage a real reflection of their own characters—saw it and perhaps admired it—saw it and perhaps were ashamed of it—God only knows.

Character is not the best and all there is for us. Defaulting bank cashiers claim to have good characters. The lawyer who saves a guilty client from the penalty of the law claims to have a good character. The failure of character is sure to show unless character is built upon Christ. It must have back of it a Christian personality. Men must get up to the self-conscious, self-governing, self-revealing plane of Christ's life. "If it were not so I would have told you." His perfect candor would be a splendid thing in business if everybody only thought so, in court trials and legislative proceedings, in church and home and everywhere. Christ has never been put under bond to keep the peace but he is willing to go on our bond and guarantee society by guaranteeing the individual.

Men are saved by a person and not by law, not by conventional goodness, not by character, not even by the general goodness of God. They are saved by a Person who does not need first to save himself, who is perfect in his own personality and who is able to perfect all who come to God through

him. We must have an unobstructed view of this Person. It is freely given and the candor of Christ challenges the confidence of men in every age. Salvation is the work of a Person on both sides and God's personal approach to man requires man's personal approach to God.

When the explorer Nansen pushed far into the frozen north he carried with him a musical record made by his wife. The song was his favorite and music was sweet to his ear but the person back of both, distant as she was, sustained his courage and insured his safe return. The power of one person over another is great and how great should be the power of the Person of Christ who is so near to us and whom we are permitted to behold with unobstructed view? The man who resists this power resists God.

"He who will not be ruled by the rudder
Shall be ruled by the rock."

The man who welcomes this power has learned the secret of salvation for it takes a Person to save a person.

And this brings us to our third thought. Men need to be saved by a Person whose presence and whose power cover these two realms of being and life, the natural and the supernatural.

The natural and the supernatural are not separate and independent kingdoms disconnected and unrelated for the breath of God has touched the natural wherever life appears. Science is better satisfied than ever before that life comes from the creative hand of God. Twenty-five years ago a few scientific men thought to prove that generation was spontaneous and that life could be accounted for by the ooze of the ocean bed. But God is greater than matter and science welcomes Him into this world where he is likely to stay. God is a supernatural being and Christ is a supernatural being but as a man Christ is also a natural being and as a man he is also supernatural. Things present and things to come meet in harmony in his life as they should in every right life and the

adjustment is not so hard as it appears to be. Jesus had no conflict save with sin and Satan. He comes to earth to realize to us a divine and human personality but while he walked the earth he spoke of himself as being in heaven, while he conversed with his three disciples on the mountain top he was transfigured before them.

He crosses and recrosses the line that is supposed to separate the natural and the supernatural. Men cross this line when they pass into the future but they never return except at the command of God. They are not masters of these two realms as Jesus was and is. He spoke of life here and life hereafter. He looked into both realms with the same eyes and describes both with the same assurance. His candor shines out more clear as he tells his disciples on the eve of his departure: "In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you." He can not and will not deceive them by silence as the ethics of men so often permit them to do. He serves men with *his* ethics and *his* wisdom and *his* love.

His supernatural power belonged to him as a supernatural person. Hence he came to his disciples when the doors were shut for fear of the Jews and stood in their midst. The dying man never asks for the opening of the door of his chamber in order that he may pass out of this world when his spirit is released from his body. The spirit can not be imprisoned by windows, doors and walls. Nor can the body of Jesus as the instrument of his spirit interfere with his presence wherever he wills to be. "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth," he says, and just that very power ought to be lodged somewhere for the well-being of man. To him it is given and to him it properly belongs and every man should observe a day of coronation when he crowns him Lord of all.

These two words, natural and supernatural, never fell from the lips of Jesus. He knows all the facts in the case but he does not think as men think. He is constrained by no theory and limited by no habit of mind. He is free and his

view point is better for he sees both sides of a question and the whole way around. His view is not partial but complete because his mental machinery is not set to some theory that limits its action. He is free in his thought because he is free as a Person in the whole realm of personal life on earth and in heaven.

But Christ expects his disciples to take his view of life, present and future, to see as he sees because they stand where he stands, to look with personal interest to the heavenly mansions while they yet occupy earthly tabernacles. "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God believe also in me." As man bases his life on God's life there is rest for him, there is a better world for him, there is a way thither and Christ himself is that way, Christ in his divine and human personality. Men who rise into personal life of the Christian kind are his followers. To them the miraculous is not a stumbling block nor is the ordinary devoid of interest. This world and the next minister to them for even here and now they belong to both.

Christ is a supernatural Person. He belongs to the spiritual and eternal. His kingdom is not of this world. His presence here and the manifestation of his power here may be for a season only. And in like manner the Christian is a supernatural person. He belongs to the spiritual and eternal. He belongs to the Kingdom of God. His presence here is for his own development and for the service of his kind. And so the Christian is both a natural and a supernatural being.

How limited and untrue is the conception that the hand of death alone opens the door between the natural and the supernatural. It is not a Christian conception. It has no foundation in our text or anywhere in the Bible. Nor does it reflect Christian experience. Out of eternity Christ comes forth and enters time and in time men may know Christ and eternity. A Japanese historian describes the investment of Port Arthur and the capture of fort after fort. In one

instance he relates how two soldiers lay close to each other ready to charge when the order was given and how one was instantly killed while the other was left unharmed. One was taken in a moment from his friend and landed in eternity. Both were in one world and a moment later the two were in separate worlds. Let us not criticise this description but let us just consider that these two men ought to have belonged to the two worlds all the time and when the one left the one world he was not a total stranger to the other.

Christ swings open the door of life and bids us enter in. He opens it as a Person to persons and as a person we may enter if we will. Christ is not a character but a Person who fulfils the law from the center out, who lives a right life because he is right at heart. He is a center of holy emotion and thought and will. The little child is not a character but person undeveloped but with all the elements of personality awaiting a symmetrical unfoldment. When he comes to years and loses his moral balance he becomes a character and acts a part. When he tries to redeem himself and reform himself on moral lines he becomes a character in a new and better sense. He has a worth he did not have before, visible to himself and his friends. When the candor of Christ wins his confidence, when he becomes a follower of Jesus as his personal Savior, when he enters the Kingdom of God as a little child he becomes a person once more. He is an organic whole—he is saved. The words of Christ have a new significance for him—"because I live ye shall live also."

The man who denies the supernatural confesses his own limitation. For him it does not exist. He has not entered it knowingly. He is uninstructed, unappreciative and unbelieving in the presence of Christ and in a world which reflects God everywhere. To him individual life must remain an enigma dark and insoluble until the light of God shines in through the Person of Christ. Paul shows us that a man knows the things of a man because the spirit of man is in him and in order to know the things of God he must have the

Spirit of God. To know the supernatural we must be supernatural and cultivate the spiritual side of our nature. We must be all we are designed to be, all we can be and all we ought to be. We must be persons and not merely characters. We must be centers of holy life even as Christ is such a center and because his presence and power have transformed us. This morning he makes his appeal to us. This morning he pledges himself to us. This morning he stands before us as the self-revelation of God.

If Christ is the sum and substance of our religion on the one side ; if his candor offers us an unobstructed view of his Person; if we need this view because it takes a Person to save a person ; and if salvation must be secured by a Person who is supreme in the two realms of life, the natural and the supernatural, then let us bow before him in spirit and worship him in spirit and in truth. Each, silent and alone can worship him in the invisible temple of his own heart with the assurance that God and heaven sees and hears, that he knows them that are his and no one is able to pluck them out of his hand.

The candor of Christ claims our confidence and as the one is personal we are sure the other must be also. The one is complete and the other should not be partial and defective. Professor James the great psychologist of Harvard has recently declared that what this age needs is the moral equivalent of war, because it is suffering from the dillettante softness of the past forty years. The statement has almost the force of argument but when we accept it let us apply it to the moral conflict in which every man is interested and the spiritual victories every man ought to win. Let us lose sight of conditions and catch sight of persons. Let us stand with anybody that stands right as Abraham Lincoln said and did, "stand with him while he is right and part with him when he is wrong." This will be war enough for the best of us and will easily overcome any tendency to dillettante softness. It will temper us with Christian sincerity and Christian courage.

Christ's candor may be regarded as his method and why should it not be ours? If it is his working theory in dealing with men, why may it not be ours? He had nothing to conceal and much to reveal while we have less to reveal and more to conceal but if we were only more like him in person we could afford to be more like him in practice. Candor in the home, candor in society, candor in business, candor in courts of justice, candor in legislative halls, candor in the church at the direct effect of the candor of Christ reproducing itself in men and women, would work a reformation if not a revolution. It would make every thing easier except the way of the transgressor which has always been hard. It would be a welcome change and a sweet relief from the studied deceptions that have been cruel and often criminal. The candor of Christ as a method of dealing with others is sane and sweet and Christian.

One of the perfections of Christ is his candor and one of our perfections may be our confidence in him. These are answering attitudes of moral beings who have honestly faced each other and have undertaken to be friendly. In his own Person Christ comes to us and this is his perfection while our perfection lies in our coming to him. As one person stands related to another in all the bonds and amenities of life so Christ and the Christian are related. Each knows the other, each appreciates the other and each trusts the other. His candor invites us even as his disciples of old to occupy this place of personal association and his message to them is his message to us—"If it were not so I would have told you." He is facing us and we may well face him here for we expect to face him hereafter.

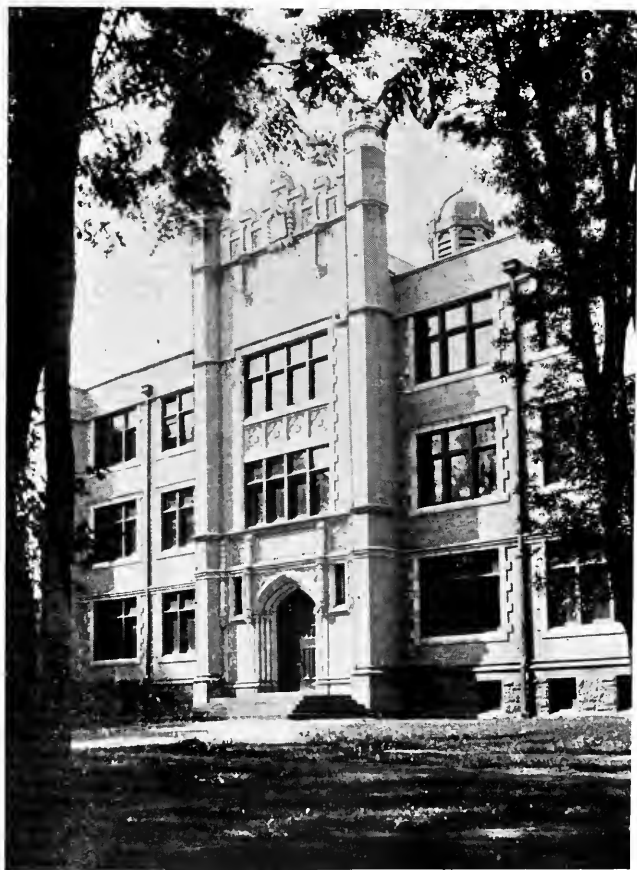
My final word, addressed to the Class of 1909, springs from my text and theme as a second conclusion. You have each professed confidence in Christ. You came to this institution as Christians and you go hence as Christians. You are better Christians than ever before, better established in your Christian faith, better acquainted with your Bible and better

prepared for Christian service. You know the value of your confidence in Christ to sustain your will, to clarify your intellect and to govern your emotions. It has a value that is only realized in Christian personality. You are Christian men and women who are to be centers of light and life wherever you may cast your lot.

Be easily religious and naturally Christian. The hardship of religious life is often nothing more than an effort to do two things instead of one. The saying, "There is method in his madness," may have a companion piece of proverbial wisdom, "There is madness in his method." Our methods should be sane and Christian, just as we ourselves are, for our methods may betray us as well as our plans and purposes. He is a weak Christian who is overburdened by duty or overcome by temptation. He is a strong Christian who is full of faith and the Holy spirit.

If Lebanon Valley College has aided you in acquiring a liberal culture it has also aided you in strengthening your moral nature. "Man does not have conscience," says Carlyle, "conscience has him." Do not become restive under its restraints and seek to cast off its authority. You need your conscience as the mariner needs his compass. So also you need Christ, that Person through whom you should realize your own personality. Without him you will not be at home here or hereafter. With him "all things are yours, whether life or death, or things present or things to come, all are yours."

If you can assure me this morning that your confidence in Christ will always answer faithfully to his candor I can bid you go from these halls without suffering one pang of regret or one chill of fear. I can not foresee your future but there is One who sees and you go forth under his personal care. If he prepares a place for you in the supernatural realm of life and being will he not prepare a place for you in this present world? Will he do the greater thing and forget or fail to do the less? There is a place of service and perhaps of sacrifice waiting for you. Your confidence in him may fail at times but his candor, never! Face him and you will always find him facing you.



ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Evening

C. S. Parker

Rev. G. Upson

Elkhart, Ind

Hammond
Lake water
at 10:00

Benj. T. Lewis
Media, Pa



BX9878.9 .K27
Baccalaureate sermon

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00047 4025